Chapter 7
A. Information Technology

California's state government is a massive operation, yet its information technology is decades behind the private sector, hindering the productivity of state workers. The state must fundamentally change the way it manages its technology to meet the needs of a modern workforce and properly govern California's vast and diverse economy.

Despite California's status as the sixth largest economy in the world and the birthplace of the tech revolution, the state government has no common technology standards and it cannot exchange information reliably between—or even within—its 79 departments. Yet the technology to transform California's state government into a model 21st century organization is available and proven. To achieve the level of productivity needed to successfully perform government functions, the state must accomplish the following three tasks:

1. Consolidate and align the management of state information technology
2. Use technology to support California's citizens and businesses
3. Standardize technology platforms to efficiently manage common, internal business functions

The flexibility and productivity of California's state government has been severely restricted by fundamental technology policy failures. The state has no ability to reliably report current or historical information—it cannot report the exact number of employees it has or the number of vehicles it owns. State workers waste large amounts of time working with incompatible systems and basic computer problems—state workers spend over 90,000 hours per year updating desktop computer programs. There are no incentives to change and there is no common understanding of the value of technology improvements—projected savings from IT projects are preemptively cut from department budgets. The state's mismanagement of contracts and vendors led to two infamous implementation failures. Due to these failures, which had significant budgetary and political consequences, departments statewide are cautious to the point of inaction and do not even attempt to obtain approval for IT projects over a certain financial threshold. In emergencies, the state is practically blind—it does not know where its emergency personnel and equipment are at all times.

CPR recommends a series of general and specific actions that should be taken to bring the state's information technology to a level appropriate for such a dynamic economy. The following chart summarizes these recommendations.

Exhibit 1
Information Technology Proposals